BOSTON UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis

THE CHANGES IN THE PHYSICAL STAGE OF ENGLAND FROM 1660 to 1700: CAUSE AND EFFECT

by

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(A.B., University of Iowa, 1929)

submitted in partial fulfilment of the

requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

1932

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Part II

Introduction

Each age adds to and enlarges the inventions of the age before, and so the world goes on advancing. This same principle is essentially true in the development of the theatre. The Elizabethan stage is not something remote and dead, for it was upon the principle of that stage, that our modern stage bases its foundation. It is true that it was not until the age of the Restoration that the modern theatre came into existence, but, nevertheless, we find that the idea for this so-called modern theatre found root in the platform stage of the Elizabethan public theatres. This stage, in turn, developed and, in the private theatres of that same age, we find the connecting link between the platform stage and the picture stage of the Restoration. In all three of these theatres, we have an outer stage with no curtain in front of it; an inner stage closed by a curtain; proscenium doors on either side of the inner stage; and directly above the proscenium doors, we have balcony windows. The outer stage after 1660 is somewhat smaller than the Elizabethan outer stage and, instead of being called an outer stage, is given the name of "apron." As the stage develops, this apron becomes smaller and smaller until, in our present-day theatres, we find that it has almost completely lost its identity. Since the fundamental principles are the same, there must be some reason why, in Shakespeare's day,

London supported eleven theatres when, less than fifty years later, London was supporting only two. First we must realize that during this brief span of years a great many things took place. The things that chiefly affected the number of theatres were a change in audience, a change in the control of the theatre, and the introduction of scenery.

In Queen Elizabeth's day, London was almost theatre mad. During this time, the theatre belonged to the common people, although it was often frequented by the nobility. At this time London had a population of between one and two hundred thousand people and of these, some thirty thousand attended the theatre weekly. The people loved stories of adventure and travel, of history and war. They cared very little for the play of ideas and psychology, but cared rather for plays of heroes and kings. In our opinion, they were brutal in their fondness for the ridicule of the insane and the deformed.[1] While these people were delighting in the plays given in the public theatres, another group, including members of the court and the nobility, were beginning to take an interest in the theatre. This group was soon to find entertainment in the private theatres where the prices were high enough to keep the loud and boisterous rabble out. Since the private theatres were catering to a class of wealth, we naturally would expect to see a change in their appearance. They now took on a higher tone, the productions were more

1 - An Introduction to Drama, Hubbell and Beaty, Page 125.

elaborate, and many conveniences were afforded here that could not be had in the public theatres. From 1642 on, for a number of years, the theatres were closed. During this time a different attitude was adopted toward the theatre by the middle class. People, who were so interested in the theatres in Elizabeth's time, seem to have forgotten or have lost interest.

In 1660 Charles II came to the throne and brought with him a love for the theatre. While he was in exile in France, he had a group of players to amuse him. Immediately on his return he reopened the theatres, but, instead of letting many reopen, he gave a patent to operate theatres only to two men. Davenant and Killigrew became great rivals, and it was through their efforts that a great advancement was made in the theatre. The superficial court audience demanded amusement and, because of this, we find many new and different novelties introduced in this period. If, however, we examine the stage carefully, we will find that the essential parts of the stage have remained practically the same as we saw them in the private and public theatres of the Elizabethan period. By the introduction of scenery at this time we have the formal change from the platform stage to the picture stage.

Sources of Information

There are four sources from which we can obtain knowledge as to the exact form and structure of the Elizabethan stage. They are:

1. Pictures of the Elizabethan stage.
2. The contract of the Fortune Theatre.
3. References and stage directions found in the Elizabethan plays.
4. Definite information regarding the appearance of the stage at the beginning of the Restoration.[1]

First let us consider the pictures. There now exist four pictures which are supposed to represent a typical Elizabethan stage. The pictures are called the Swan, the Red Bull, the Roxana and the Messalinz. They all show both similarity and dissimilarity. The Swan and the Red Bull pictures differ from one another in their stage, and they both differ from the Roxana and the Messalina pictures. The Swan picture shows two stage doors and no curtain, while the Red Bull has one door at the rear closed by a curtain. Both the Roxana and the Messalina pictures show a curtain extending across the entire rear of the outer stage. These differences alone would make it impossible to construct a stage; hence we must look into the origin to find which of these pictures is to be regarded as a reliable source for the reconstruction of a typical Elizabethan stage.

1 - The Story of the Drama, J. R. Taylor, Page 485.

Mr. W. J. Lawrence, in an article in Englische Studien, Vol. XXXII, Part I, Page 46, has collected much evidence against the "Swan," proving that it is impractical as a source for reconstructing an Elizabethan stage. The picture was drawn by a Hollander, Arend Van Buchell, from a description sent him by his friend, Johannes de Witt. It is only logical to believe that a person cannot make an accurate drawing in every detail from just a casual description and, of course it would be much harder for one who knew very little about acting, to know just what is and what isn't an essential part of the stage. The picture shows only two doors and many of the theatres had three doors. From the Prologue of the play, "Four Prentices of London," which was acted at the Red Bull in 1615, we find the following stage directions, "Enter three blacke Clokes, at three doors."[1] Mr. Reynolds tells us that it is fairly certain that the Blackfrairs, the Cockpit and the Red Bull had three stage doors and, since the same plays were produced at the Globe as were produced at the Blackfrairs, one would judge that the stages would be similar. If the Globe had three doors then the Fortune must have had three doors, since they were built alike except in specific details.[2] Another thing of importance is that the picture is undated. Mr. Lawrence tells us that the picture is wrong in size and material; that is shows a movable stage supported by fixed columns; and that it shows no curtain nor a place to put one. In summing up, we find that is was drawn from

1 - Some Principles of Elizabethan Staging, G. F. Reynolds, Page 7.

2 - Ibid.

heresay; hence, it is lacking in some of the essentials of an Elizabethan stage such as the right number of doors and a curtain.

The Red Bull picture formed the frontispiece of Francis Kirkman's edition of the Drolls. This edition was a collection of comic one act scenes played during the Commonwealth and later, published during the Restoration under the title of "The Wits." On the title page, it states that these scenes were played at the Bartholmew Faire and in other Country Faires, in Halls, and Taverns, on several Mountebank stages, at Lincoln Inn-Fields, and other places during the time the theatres were closed. From the preface of Part II, we learn that there was a chance performance in the Red Bull theatre. It seems that from this remark, the crude stage on the frontispiece was named Red Bull. This picture shows only a bare stage with branch and rabbit-eared footlights. This seems strange since there was no need of artificial lighting in the Red Bull due to the fact that it was open to the weather and the plays were always acted in the day time. We also know there were no footlights used in this period. We have been told that the Red Bull was the scene for many especially propertied plays which called for ascending and descending characters, and that it had more than one door. We can conclude that this picture did not represent the Red Bull stage, but that perhaps it was a drawing of one of the hastily constructed stages on which the Drolls were performed.[1]

The Roxana and Messalina pictures are very similar. The

1 - Shakesperian Stage, Albright, Pages 40-43.

Roxana picture is on the frontispiece of the play, "The Tradegy of Roxana." It was printed in 1632 and was brought out at Cambridge University, not on the stage of one of the public theatres. The play was written in Latin and that fact alone supports the evidence that it was a university play.[1]

The Messalina picture is found in the center of the lower part of the frontispiece of the "Tragedy of Messalina." This was an English play, written by Nathaniel Richards in 1640.[2] It was acted by His Majesty's Revells. The Revells acted at different theatres, one of them, the Red Bull. This picture shows a permanently constructed stage with a curtain under the outer edge of the gallery, and a solid railing aroung the outer stage. It may be a picture of the Red Bull stage. The Roxana and Messalina pictures may be taken as authentic, and may be used as genuine evidence in the reconstruction of a typical Elizabethan stage.[3]

Our second source of opinion is from the contract for the Fortune Theatre. In this contract, the exact dimensions were given as to the size of the house, the galleries, and the stage. In the contract was a statement to the effect that the stage of this theatre should be built like the stage of the Globe, except in specified instances.[4]

From the plays of the period, we get valuable information. By

1 - The Story of the Drama, J. R. Taylor, Page 489.

2 - Ibid.

3 - Shakesperian Stage, Albright, Pages 43-45.

4 - The Story of the Theatre, Glen Hughes, Chapter 12.

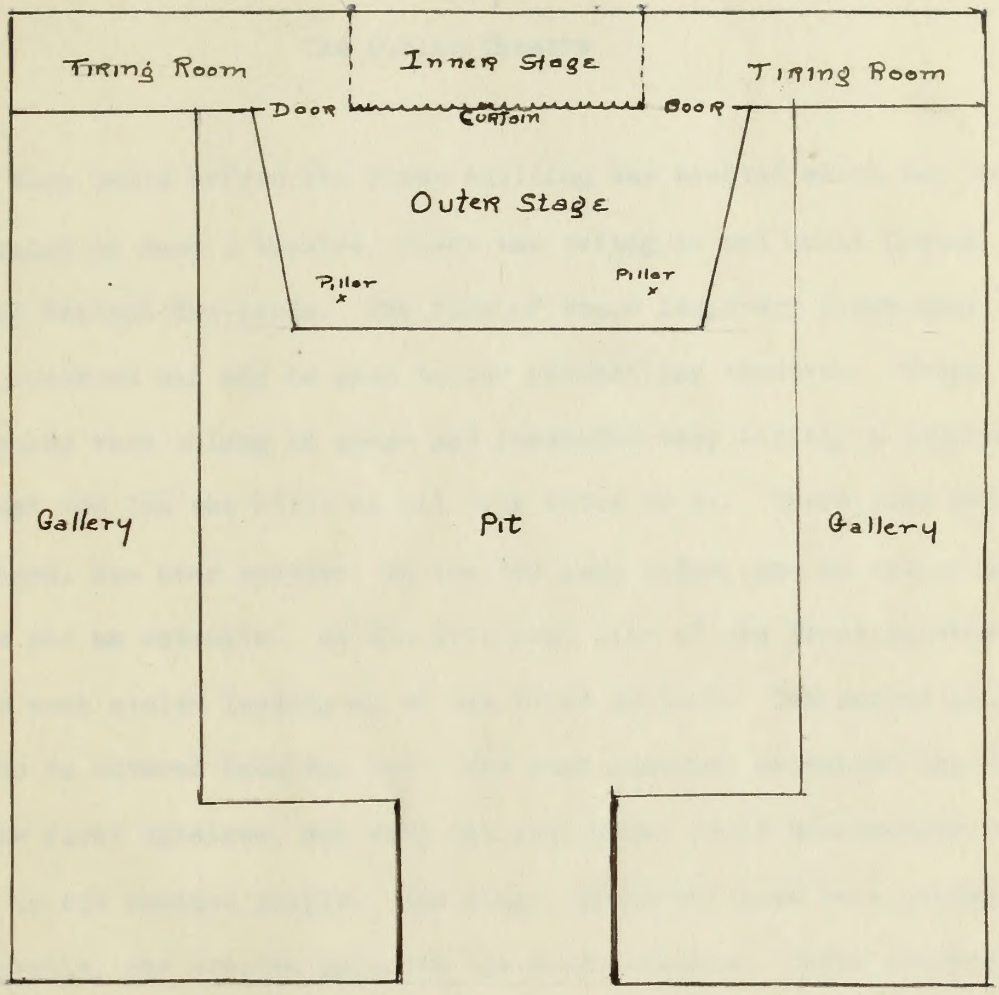
studying the stage directions, we learn little that is of value concerning the exact position of the essential parts of the stage. In fact, they tell little more than when the characters enter or leave the stage. It is from the text of the plays that we find a wealth of material concerning the physical stage of the period. By the study of these plays we learn that there was an outer and an inner stage, each of which could be used separately, or, if necessary, they could be combined into one; that there was a curtain dividing the two stages, which could be opened or closed at will; that there were doors, one on either side of the stage, called proscenium doors, through which most of the characters entered; that there were two balcony windows, one over each of the proscenium doors; that there was a gallery over the inner stage; and that over the gallery was a hut, the room in which the machinery was kept, and from which characters, and sometimes props, were lowered or raised.[1]

The last source of information is the Restoration theatres. The Restoration theatres opened in the buildings in which the plays of the Elizabethan Age had been acted. I say buildings because all that there was left were walls; the rest had been destroyed by the soldiers and mobs in the days of the Commonwealth. Behind these old walls, the first Restoration theatres had their beginning and thus, a new era in the theatre was ushered in.[2]

1 - The Story of the Drama, J. R. Taylor, Page 492.

2 - The Story of the Drama, J. R. Taylor, Page 486.

Taking the information gained from the two authentic pictures, the Roxana and the Messalina; from the contract for the Fortune Theatre, in which the exact dimensions for the theatre were stated; from reading the plays of the period; and from the study of the theatre of the Restoration, we are equipped with enough material to start to reconstruct a typical Elizabethan stage. It is hard to decide which authority to follow because so much of the vast amount written on this subject is contradictory. The material I use, however, I have found has been agreed upon by at least two of the many authorities.



Ground Plan

of

The Fortune Theatre

"Shakespeare's Theatre"
Ashley H. Thorndike

III.

The Origin and Variation in the General Form of The Public Theatre

Many years before the first building was erected which was to be called by name a theatre, there was acting in and about London in the various Inn-yards. The form of these temporary playhouses was preserved and may be seen in our present day theatres. These Inn-yards were oblong in shape and resembled very closely a courtyard, in that the Inn was built on all four sides of it. There were galleries arranged, one over another, on the two long sides, and at either end there was an entrance. On the left hand side of the front gateway, there were stairs leading up to the first gallery. The second gallery had to be entered from the Inn. The yard somewhat resembled the "pit" in the first theatres, and with the galleries, could accommodate from five to six hundred people. The stage, which may have been permanent or movable, was erected opposite the main entrance. These Inn-yards had a strong influence on both the stage and the auditorium of the first public theatres.[1]

The shape of the public theatres varied greatly; the most popular forms, however, seem to have been circular or hexagonal. These theatres were built of timber, and the exterior was usually covered with lime and plaster.[2] In some cases this exterior was painted. This is known

1 - Pre-Restoration Stage Studies, W. J. Lawrence, Chapter 1.

2 - Shakespearean Playhouses, J. I. Adams, Page 47.

to be a certainty in the case of the Globe Theatre.[1] The public theatre was partly open to the weather and partly covered by a thatched or tiled roof. On this roof there was a turret, and here the flag of the theatre was flown an hour or so before the performance.[4] The stage was a platform projecting into the yard. This stage may or may not have been permanent; its permanency depended upon the theatre's use during the times there was no theatrical performances. If it were used as a theatre only, as in the case of the Globe and the Fortune theatres, the stage was permanent, but if it were used also for bull-baiting and fighting, it is likely that the stage was not a permanent fixture. At the rear of the stage was the tiring-house, over the inner stage was a balcony, and on the sides were three tiers of galleries. A large part of the audience stood in the open yard; however, those who could afford the extra admission sat in the gallery on benches or stools. The admission to the pit was a penny, and an additional penny or two was charged to those who made use of the galleries.[2] The cost of the erection of these theatres usually ranged from five hundred to seven hundred pounds.[3]

The Fortune Theatre was built by Edward Alleyn, an actor. It was located north of London Square, and is the only theatre for which we have the exact dimensions. It measured eighty feet each way on the

1 - History of the London Stage, H. Barton Baker, Page 17.

2 - Shakespeare's Theatre, A. H. Thorndike, Page 406.

3 - Shakespearean Playhouses, J. I. Adams, Page 45.

4 - An Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the English Stage, Malone, Page 66.

to be a certainty in the case of the *Globe Theatre*.[1] The lighting-arrangements partly open to the weather and partly covered by a thatched or tiled roof. On this roof there was a gallery, and here the floor of the theatre was flown as floor of an open-air performance.[2] The stage was a platform projecting into the yard. Main above was of a private nature permanent; the permanent dependent upon the theatre's not for the stage there was no elaborated performance. If it were open on a weather only, as in the case of the *Globe* and the *Fortune* theatres, the stage was permanent, but if it were open also for well-lighted performing, it is likely that the stage was not a permanent fixture. If the roof of the stage was too flimsy to bear the weight of a gallery, or if the theatre stage was a balcony, and so the stage were turned into a gallery. A study of the evidence about in the open yard, however, shows that the extra accommodation and in the gallery or balcony or stage. The provision to the pit was a gallery, and an additional stage or two was reserved to those who made use of the galleries.[3] The stage of the exception of those theatres usually hanged from the theatres of seven thatched gallery.[4]

The *Fortune Theatre* was built by Edward Alleyn, an actor. It was located north of London Wall, and is the only theatre for which we have the exact dimensions. It measured eighty feet each way on the

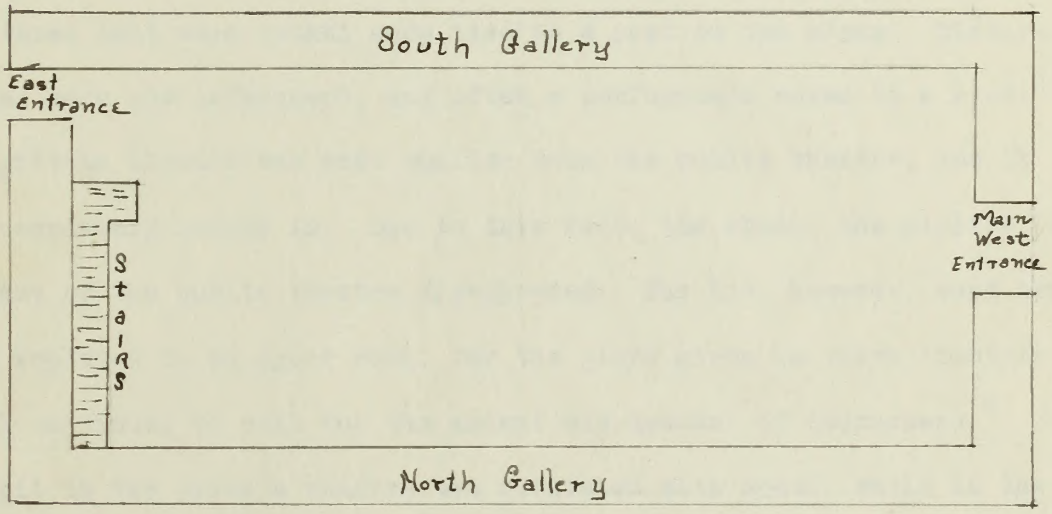
1 - History of the Globe Theatre, Samuel Rowe, Page 17.

2 - Shakespeare's Theatre, W. Creighton, Page 108.

3 - Shakespeare Playhouses, J. C. Adams, Page 70.

4 - An Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the Modern Stage, Baldwin, Page 80.

outside, and fifty-five feet on the inside. The stage was forty-three feet wide and, including the tiring-room at the back, was thirty-nine and a half feet deep. It was only thirty-two feet from the floor to the ceiling and yet it had three tiers of galleries; the first was twelve feet; the second eleven feet; and the third nine feet. The cost of its erection was five hundred and fifty pounds. This theatre remained standing until the beginning of the nineteenth century.[1]



Inn-Yard Ground Plan

"Pre-Restoration Stage Studies," William John Lawrence

1 - History of the London Stage, H. Barton Bakes, Page 17.

IV.

The Private Theatre as Distinguished from the Public Theatre

It is hard to distinguish between the private and the public theatre. It is known that the private theatre was patronised by the nobility who rented private boxes or rooms to which they kept the keys, while the public theatres were frequented by a noisy, unruly audience that insisted on smoking, drinking, and playing cards. Often after the plays had begun, this audience of the public theatre continued the noise and the card playing.[1] Here, at this theatre, pickpockets were frequent and those that were caught were tied to a post on the stage. Disturbances were not infrequent, and often a performance ended in a riot.[2] The private theatre was much smaller than the public theatre, and it was completely roofed in. Due to this fact, the shade, the pillars, and the hut of the public theatre disappeared. The hut, however, must have been replaced in an upper room, for the plays given in these theatres still continued to call for the ascent and descent of characters.[3] The pit in the private theatre was furnished with seats, while in the public theatre, the people in the pit were forced to stand. The stage in the private theatre, instead of projecting far into the yard as was the custom in the public theatres, shrank in depth and increased in breadth. This stage extended across the hall. This led to the devotion of some

1 - History of the London Stage, H. Barton Baker, Page 18.

2 - Shakespeare's Theatre, Ashley H. Thorndike, Page 408.

3.- Shakespeare's Theatre, Ashley H. Thorndike, Page 81.

of the space on either side for the spectators.[1] Here the critics and the wits usually sat. Sitting on the stage originated in the public theatres, and here it was maintained, even though the ordinary spectators did much grumbling. In some of the theatres, however, a small railing was placed around the stage to keep spectators off the platform. The performances in the private theatres were given by candle light. Both tallow and wax candles were used, but as a rule, unless it was some special occasion, tallow was used because it was less expensive. The plays in the public theatres were given in the day time and since they were open to the sky no artificial lighting was needed. Most of the public theatres were on the outside of the city limits of London, while the private theatres were located in the heart of the city.

The private theatres grew out of the amateur dramatic movement of the sixteenth century. The movement was centered in the activities of the choir boys. The most famous of these were the boys of St. Paul's. These boys usually played in remodeled buildings, and because their productions were of a religious nature, they were allowed to operate within the city limits. Burbage, whom we know as a manager and a director, soon gained control of some of these houses, by cooperating with the choir boys.[2] Perhaps the most famous of these private theatres was the Blackfriars. This theatre was the first play house of its era to be

1 - The Elizabethan Playhouse and Other Studies, W. J. Lawrence, Page 18, vol. 1.

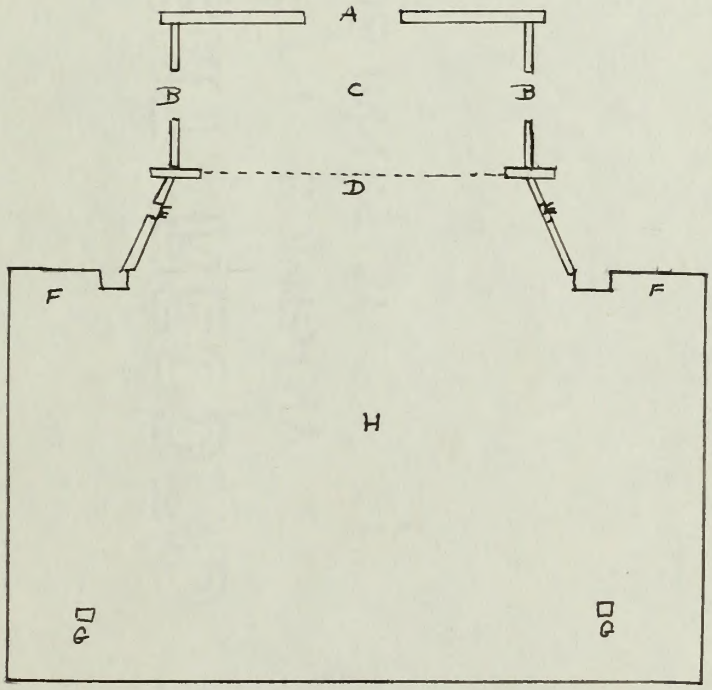
2 - The Story of the Theatre, Glenn Hughes, Chapter 12.

honored by a visit from a reigning monarch. It was the first of the rectangular theatres, as opposed to the circular and hexagonal shapes of the public theatres. It was the smallest of the theatres and could accommodate only about six hundred people. The pit of this theatre was to become the best place in the house instead of the worst. In it were placed benches in gradually ascending rows. Here too, we find the regulation three galleries, but this time they ran along three sides of a rectangle. The stage extended across the hall and was permanent. There was no other vital change, except in the position of the two main entering doors. The public theatres had a straight front while here in the Blackfriars, the two main doors and their overhanging balconies were placed in an oblique position at either end of the tiring house. The result of this was so satisfactory that it was soon adopted in all the private and public theatres.[1] The Cockpit or Phoenix Theatre was an important theatre of this time. Here, as at the Blackfriars, we see ladies and gentlemen of high social standing. The ladies usually wore masks to hide their identity, since theatre going was comparably new for women.

1 - The Elizabethan Playhouse and Other Studies, W. J. Lawrence, Page 19, Vol. 1.

William Archer's Conjectural Elizabethan

Stage with Oblique Doors.



Key

a--Middle, a third door, leading from tiring house to inner stage.
b--Side entrances to inner stage.
c--Inner stage.
d--Curtains separating inner and outer stage.
e--Oblique side doors surmounted by boxes or balconies.
f--Outer stage angles for people to stand in, in the action, unobserved.
g--Pillars of the Heavens on the public stage.
h--Center stage.

V.

The Reconstruction of a Typical Elizabethan Public Theatre

Three Important Parts of Stage

The stage of the public theatre consisted of three important parts. The first, or front stage, was an unenclosed platform, usually permanent, extending into the yard, with a tiring-house at the rear. In the case of the Fortune theatre, this stage was forty-three feet wide, and extended into the middle of the yard about twenty-seven and a half feet. The level of the stage was about three or four feet above the ground.[1] There was standing room between its sides and the inner wall of the theatre; thus the actors were viewed from three sides instead of just one, as is the case now. The outer stage in the private theatres, instead of extending into the yard because of lack of room, shrank in depth and increased in breadth. This stage was permanent. At the Blackfriars, it was boarded in below, and decorated along the front with a carved balistrade.[2] We will later find that the stage of the Restoration took its form from the private rather than the public theatres. The second part, the inner stage, which later became known as the study, was separated from the outer stage by a curtain.[3] This stage was used for bedroom scenes, for caves, counting houses and tombs. This stage in the Fortune theatre was about twelve feet deep. The darkness was much relieved on

1 - The Elizabethan Stage, E. K. Chambers, Page 526, Vol. 2.

2 - The Elizabethan Playhouse, W. J. Lawrence, Page 18, Vol. 1.

3 - Some Principles of Elizabethan Staging, G. F. Reynolds, Chapter 1.

this stage by a window at the back which admitted reflected light.[1] The third part was the upper inner stage. This stage took the form of a central room on the first story of the tiring-house and was located right over the inner stage.[2] In the Fortune theatre it was about twelve feet above the platform stage.[3] The average stage was about twenty to thirty feet deep, and twenty to twenty-five feet wide at the curtain. The inner stage was ten to twelve feet deep, twenty to twenty-five feet wide, and twelve feet high. The upper inner stage had the same dimensions as the lower inner stage. The curtain between the outer and inner stage was twenty to twenty-five feet by twelve feet.[4] The Fortune theatre's stage was a little larger than the average stage of that day.

Proscenium Doors — The main entering doors on this platform stage were the two proscenium doors, one on either side of the inner stage. The tiring-house of the first public theatre had a straight front, and naturally the main entering doors were in a straight line. This condition changed after the Blackfriar had been built. In this theatre, the entering doors and the balconies above them were placed in an oblique position at either end of the tiring-house. This change in the position of the doors proved so satisfactory that soon all the entering doors in both private and public theatres were placed in this position.[5]

1 - The Elizabethan Playhouse, W. J. Lawrence, Page 21, Vol. 2.

2 - The Elizabethan Playhouse, W. J. Lawrence, Page 6, Vol. 1.

3 - The History of the London Stage, H. B. Baker, Page 17.

4 - The Story of the Drama, J. R. Taylor, Page 492.

5 - The Elizabethan Playhouse, W. J. Lawrence, Page 19, Vol. 1.

It can be proven by stage directions that this outer stage was approached by two proscenium doors, and that an inner stage existed at the back, and was separated from the outer stage by a curtain. We can prove this best by a play in which the characters enter the outer stage, and while there, the curtain is opened, revealing the inner stage:

"Looking Glass for London and England," II, 1. They have just closed the curtains to the Queen's Chamber, according to her orders, when the King enters with Magi. They perform tricks before him, and he passes off and on the stage; but finally he approaches the chamber of fair Remelia with the words, 'Now ope, Ye foldes.' He drawes the curtaines and finds her stroken with Thunder, blacke. In this scene, the outer stage with its entrance is used quite independent of the inner; the King, though he has passed off and on the stage during the exhibition, knows nothing of the fate of the Queen until the curtains are drawn."[1] We conclude from that, that there was an outer stage, an inner stage, a curtain which separated them, and two proscenium doors.

Upper Stage We have many references in Elizabethan drama to the use of the upper stage. It extended over the inner stage from the curtain hangings to the wall. It was fronted by a balcony, behind which hung a set of curtains.[2] It was often used as the walls of a city,

1 - The Shakesperian Stage, Victor E. Albright, Page 54.

2 - The Elizabethan Playhouse, W. J. Lawrence, Page 6, Vol. 1.

a fort, or a prison. Many parleys were carried on between persons on the upper stage and others on the lower stage. For example, the people in the upper stage may have been soldiers defending their fort, while the people on the outer stage were the besiegers. It could be used as a deck of a ship or for a play within a play, such as we find in Hamlet. In the latter case, the audience would sit in the upper stage and look down on the performance going on on the main stage. There were only two possible means for entrance to the upper stage, and they were from either side; and, since many of the plays called for two entrances to the upper stage, we can conclude that there were two doors, one on either side of the stage.[1]

The "hut" and the "heavens"

Above the upper stage was a small building called the "hut," in which the machinery used in the ascensions and descensions of characters was kept. This building was about twenty feet square. It has been suggested that it may have jutted out from the tire-house so as to be directly over a part of the heavens. The reason for this would be to facilitate the descents and ascents from and to the heavens.[2] The hut had two windows in front, and a door in the visible side. The "shadow" was a thatched or tile roof, projecting from the base of the hut, and sloping down and out over the stage[3] for about ten feet. This afforded a protection for the actors from the

1 - Shakesperian Stage, Victor E. Albright, Page 63.

2 - The Elizabethan Stage, E. K. Chambers, Page 546, Vol. 2.

3 - The Elizabethan Playhouse, W. J. Lawrence, Page 8, Vol. 1

weather. This shadow was painted blue to represent the sky and was given the name of the shadow or the heavens.

Entrances As has been stated before, the two main entrances were the proscenium doors at either end of the tiring-house. Besides these, there was a door at the back of the inner stage called the "mid door."[1] There must have also been side entrances to the inner stage, because props had to be moved on and off that stage, characters were often found on that stage, and characters, who are on the outer stage with the curtain closed, often cross behind the scenes. They leave by one proscenium door and enter by the other. It is true these things could all have been managed by the "mid door," but if there was much hurry, other entrances would almost have been necessary. Dr. Albright suggests that these side entrances might have taken the form of "wing entrances." He suggests that there might have been two or three wings to a side which could be put in or removed at will. If this were so, it would lend itself very readily to the "overhearing scenes" and the "stealing in and out scenes." It would also give an opportunity to look off stage and describe scenes. The most important thing, however, was that it gave a quick and straight passage across the stage.[2]

There were only two entrances to the public theatre. One was a door to the tiring-house, giving access to the stage and "the lord's room,"

1 - The Elizabethan Playhouse, Page 6, Vol. 1.

2 - Shakesperian Stage, Victor E. Albright, Page 63.

while the other was for general admission to the yard and the galleries.

Curtains Curtains play an important part on the Elizabethan stage. Although there was no front curtain on this stage, there were four distinct kinds of curtains used, and each played an important part in the make-up of the theatre. There has been much discussion about the curtain that divides the inner stage from the outer. Some writers maintain that the curtain was hung from the floor of the "hut," thus covering the balcony when it was closed. Others say it was hung under the outer edge of the upper stage. The Roxana and the Messalina pictures both show the curtain hung under the upper stage. Let us stop to consider just what would happen if the curtain were hung from the floor of the hut. In some plays the stage directions call for some of the characters to be in the gallery watching the action on the stage. If at this particular moment, the inner stage happened not to be in use, and the curtains were drawn, how then, could this be possible? For example, take the Taming of the Shrew. Sly and his companions sit above and watch the play. It seems impossible to believe that these actors were concealed by a curtain. This does not necessarily prove that all the theatres were so constructed that the curtain hung from the lower edge of the upper stage, but I think a large number of the Elizabethan scholars will agree to this.[1]

1 - Some Principles of Elizabethan Staging, G. F. Reynolds, Page 12.

A second curtain, or "traverse," is the curtain that is hung across some part of the inner stage for the purpose of hiding some prop or person until it was time for it to be discovered. For example in the Merchant of Venice, II, 7; "Enter Portia with Morocco and both their trains." Portia says to her maid, "Goe draw aside the curtains, and discover the several caskets to this noble Prince; Now make your choyse." A small part of the inner stage had been curtained off to conceal the caskets until the right moment for them to be disclosed.[1]

The third curtain was the bed curtain. The bed was completely surrounded by curtains and, at the proper moment, the curtains were drawn, revealing the bed.

The fourth curtain played a less important part than the other three. Occasionally a temporary curtain was hung on the outer stage. This was in no sense one of the regular hangings. It served its purpose when there was a play within a play. There is much confusion in the terms used in the stage directions of the plays refering to curtains. They were called "Curtain", "curtaines", "arras" and "traverse." It seems that the dramatist used the term that best suited his meter.[2]

Windows The casement was the normal stage window of this period. "Casement in this connection must be interpreted to mean a light iron or wooden sash for small panes of glass, as constituting a window or part of a window, and made to open outwards by swinging on hinges,

1 - Shakesperian Stage, Victor E. Albright, Page 59.

2 - Ibid.

attached to a vertical side of the aperture into which it is fitted. When opened, the casement was usually held in position by a long hook."[1] This was common to all the theatres in the Elizabethan period. The exact position is not known, although it is thought they were in easy range of the stage.

In two plays, there is evidence that there was a Bay Window. This may or may not have been part of the casement. These two plays were both produced at the Globe. Since we find them in the Globe, the Fortune theatre must have also had a Bay Window. The most likely position for these windows would be over one or both of the proscenium doors.[2]

In the plays, there are several references to windows with curtains. Mr. Lawrence says he believes the reference was not to an actual window, but to small curtained rooms on the second floor of the tiring-house. These rooms might be upper stage boxes which were often curtained, or it might have been the music room. In some theatres, the music room was located on the second floor of the tiring-house and it was curtained.

There may have been a back window in the upper stage which had its origin in the necessity for light. This window, however, was not in the back wall of the tiring-house, but in a partition in front of a back corridor for the players.[3] This upper stage was used very little for theatricals. In some theatres it was used as a common dressing

1 - The Elizabethan Playhouse, W. J. Lawrence, Page 33, Vol. 2.

2 - The Elizabethan Playhouse, W. J. Lawrence, Page 37, Vol. 2.

3 - The Elizabethan Playhouse, W. J. Lawrence Page 28, Vol. 1.

room.[1] There is no proof that this window existed in the public theatres, although there are three instances where it was used in the private theatres.[2] The same argument, necessity for light, could apply to the existence of a window in the lower stage.

Maps of the Fortune Theatre show external windows in the walls. It seems obvious that these windows were necessary to light both the tiring-house and the galleries.[3]

Traps Traps were a much used device in the Elizabethan theatre. The plays often demanded sudden appearances of witches and other supernatural characters. Some of these characters rose from beneath the stage and some were lowered by a rope from the "heavens." Traps are one of the oldest of the sciences of the stage. "Grave traps" were very useful and were one of the most important of the traps. The exact location of this grave trap is hard to find, but it is thought that it was located in the center of the inner stage. In this age, it was really nothing more than a trap door, covering an opening; however, simple as this was, it paved the way for elaborate stage effects. Mr. Lawrence says that it is important to note that, whenever a character falls, jumps, or is pushed into a gap, this grave trap is used. The usual que for the opening of a trap was the stamp of a foot. The traps used at this time consisted of a base, the exact size of thetrap opening, which worked up and down in four vertical grooved beams by means

1 - The Elizabethan Playhouse, W. J. Lawrence, Page 28, Vol. 1.

2 - The Elizabethan Playhouse, W. J. Lawrence, Page 50, Vol. 2.

3 - The Elizabethan Stage, E. K. Chambers, Page 543, Vol. 2.

of cords and pulleys. The stage direction, "Enter," did not necessarily mean that a character walked onto the stage. He could be brought up by a trap or be discovered by drawing a curtain.[1]

Props Props include everything on the stage but the scenery and the costumes. The props used on the Elizabethan stage were few, but sufficient to give the appearance of a certain location such as a banquet hall, a bedroom, or nature scene, and to permit the lines to be acted realistically. There was no painted scene except the heavens. Their stage was the creation of the symbolic, rather than a picture stage. By this, I mean that there were just enough props on the stage to suggest the scene rather than picture it.

Lights In the public theatres, lights were used, not as they are today to illuminate the stage, but just to indicate that the action was taking place at night. Most of the artificially lighted rear scenes are night scenes, scenes laid in obscure places, such as dungeons and tombs, and scenes in churches before candle-adorned altars. We have no direct evidence as to how the private theatres were lighted; however, there is reason to believe that chandeliers were used but no footlights. We know for certain that both wax and tallow candles were used.

1 - Pre-Restoration Stage Studies, W. J. Lawrence, Page 162.

Stairs The first evidence we have of stairs being used was found in the Inn-yards, where they led from the ground to the balcony. When the first theatres were built, they were equipped with three sets of stairs, the first leading from the basement to the lower stage, the second from the lower stage to the upper stage, and the third from the upper stage to the hut. On the Elizabethan stage, it was necessary to have the stairs behind the scenes on either side of the inner stage. Often there were situations in the plays in which the actors were required to pass from the lower to the upper level without being seen by the audience. Whenever a character left one stage and appeared on another, the stage directions usually read "Exit" and "Enter."[1]

Auditorium The galleries in the private theatres were on three sides, the stage forming the fourth side of the rectangle. The galleries in the public theatres usually formed a circle. In both theatres, however, the lower gallery was on a level with the lower stage, the second with the upper, and the third was above.[2] The lower and middle galleries were divided into boxes, but the upper one was left open. None of the sections in the galleries were provided with seats, although in most theatres, stools and cushions could be had by paying extra. The most expensive room was known as the "Gentleman's Room" or "The Twelve Penny Room." This was located in the lower gallery, close to

1 - Shakesperian Stage, Victor E. Albright, Page 74.

2 - The Elizabethan Stage, E. K. Chambers, Page 545, Vol. 2.

the stage.[1] The yard or the "pit" in the public theatres was without seats. People who stood there, were called "groundlings." In the private theatre, benches were arranged in the pit in gradually ascending rows, and this gradually became one of the best parts of the house. The seating capacity of the Fortune has been estimated as being between 2,138 and 2,558. This allowed eighteen inches for a seat and an eighteen inch square for standing room.[2] The seating capacity of the Blackfriars was about 600.[3] The audience gathered early because there were no reserved seats, and if the actors failed to put in their appearance in good time, there was much expression of impatience.

Finances Admission for standing room in the pit of the public theatres was one penny, and an additional penny or two was charged for seats in the gallery.[4] At the performance of a new play, the ordinary rates were doubled. The actors didn't receive salaries, but rather shared in the profit taken in at the door.[5] At the Blackfriars the average receipts per performance ranged from twenty to thirty pounds. The current expense for salaries of inferior actors, for rent, and for lighting amounted to forty-five shillings. The balance of the money was divided among the principle actors and shareholders. Most of the shareholders died wealthy. The Blackfriars was noted for its fine orchestra,

1 - The Elizabethan Playhouse, W. J. Lawrence, Page 9, Vol. 1.

2 - The Elizabethan Stage, E. K. Chambers, Page 526, Vol. 2.

3 - The Elizabethan Playhouse, W. J. Lawrence, Page 16, Vol. 1.

4 - Shakespeare's Theatre, Ashley H. Thorndike, Page 406.

5 - The Elizabethan Playhouse, W. J. Lawrence, Page 11, Vol. 1.

but it seems that instead of being an expense to the theatre, the musicians paid for the privilege of playing there. The reason for this is that it brought them before the eyes of the aristocratic patrons; at least, that is said to be a very probable reason.[1]

Advertisement Play bills were posted about town, announcing the play to be performed on a certain date. They stated the title, the date, the place, and sometimes the admission fee, but they never gave a list of the actors in the cast. Usually at both public and private theatres, little boards were displayed indicating in text letters what piece was to be performed. During the holidays there was no definite programme. The actors presented what the audience demanded or ran the risk of having the theatre destroyed.[2]

Method of Production There has been much discussion about the method of presentation of plays in this period. One group of scholars place the action and the properties almost entirely on the outer stage. They claim that the properties were just to suggest the scene, and not to picture it. If the outer stage were decorated with trees for a forest or street scene, the audience, an instant later, could imagine themselves in the palace, even though the trees still remained on the stage. In other words, the audience did not object to the incongruity of the scenery.[3] An example of the changing of scene

1 - History of the London Stage, H. Barton Baker, Page 21.

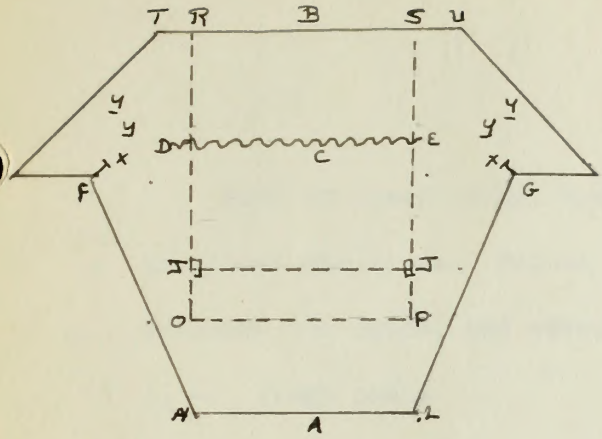
2 - The Elizabethan Playhouse, W. J. Lawrence, Page 14, Vol. 1.

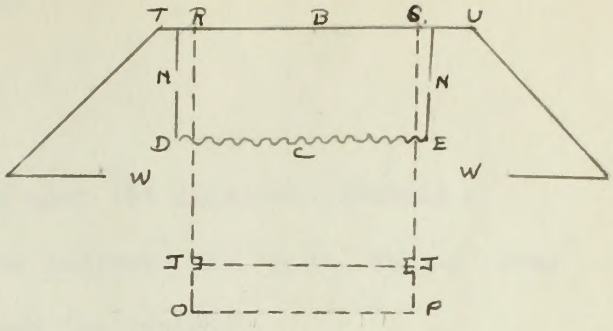
3 - The Story of the Drama, J. R. Taylor, Page 495.

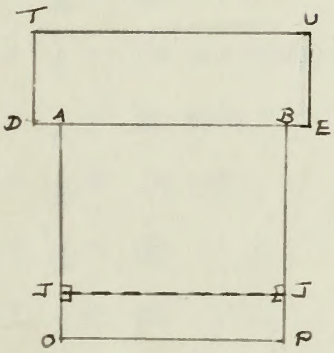
before the eyes of the audience may be found in Romeo and Juliet- (Quarto 2, 1599, Quarto 4, undated, Folio 1623) I, 4, 4. "Romeo and his friends are at first before the house of Capulet, but with the direction 'They march about the stage, and serving men came forth with their napkins,' the scene changes to the interior of the house."[1] Opposed to this group are those who believe that the playwright stopped to consider the exact part of the stage on which the action should be--outer or inner stage, balcony, or gallery, as the case might be. The alternation of outer and inner stage worked out very nicely because, while the action was taking place on the outer stage, the inner stage was being set for the next scene. When that scene was over, the curtains would be drawn again and the action continue on the outer stage. Most alternatists put any located scenes on the inner stage. If this method of presentation were used, most of the "props" used would be placed on the inner stage.[2]

1 - Some Principles of Elizabethan Staging, G. F. Reynolds, Part II, Page 2.

2 - Some Principles of Elizabethan Staging, G. F. Reynolds, Part I, Page 2.







A Typical Shakespearean Stage
Ground Plan

Victor Albright

I

Plan of lower stage, showing also the relative position of the "hut" and shade. Broken lines indicate the "hut", dotted lines indicate the shade, and waved lines the curtain.

jj -- stage posts

xx -- proscenium doors

dce-- curtain

yyyy-- wings

higedf -- outer stage

deut -- inner stage

rjjs --hut

jopj -- shade

The distance from H to i is 15 feet.

" " " f " g " 39 " .

" " " a " c " 26 5/6 feet.

" " " j " j " 20 feet.

" " " j " o " 6 " .

" " " j " r " 20 " .

" " " d " e " 25 " .

" " " b " c " 10 ".

II

Plan of the upper stage, showing the relative position of the projecting "hut" and shade. The line marking is the same as in I.

ww -- balcony windows

deut -- gallery

dce -- gallery curtains

zz -- gallery doors

The distance from d to e is 25 feet.

" " " d to t " 10 " .

III

Plan of the "heavens." This represents one plane formed by the base of the "hut" and the ceiling of the gallery and shade. The broken line indicates the connection of the "hut" and shade, and the waved line the suspended gallery curtain. Dimensions of the "hut" are given in I, and of the gallery in II. Proscenium doors and balcony windows were from 6 to 7 feet wide, the inner stage 12 feet high, and the gallery 13 feet high, making the "heavens" 25 feet above the lower stage.

VI.

Inigo Jones and the Court Masques

We can learn much of stage technique by studying the drawings of Inigo Jones. Jones was a great traveler. He spent some time in Italy, and then went to the Court of Denmark, before he came back to England to introduce new methods of staging in the English Court. He was deeply interested in the work done by the Italians in reviving classic architecture and the classic method of staging. He studied the work of Serlio and later used some of his devices when arranging scenes at Oxford. All his designs of masques show the influence of the scenes in Serlio's Architettura.[1] To Jones, the masque was a grand and elaborate spectacle. He was the masque producer from 1605 to 1640. We know that during this time he made designs for 23 masques, 3 pastorals, and 2 plays. In all his production, there was a unity of artistic design which was a weaving into a finished pattern of the motif, the dancing, the music, and the scenery.[2]

In his first Court masque, "Masque of Blackness," Jones uses no change in scenery. He did, however, introduce an artificial sea and the scene in the perspective. He renewed, in a more scientific form, the device used for wheeling in the masques. This movable element afforded variety in an otherwise fixed stage. In this masque, the "Queen and her

1 - The Court Masque, Enid Welsford, Page 174.

2 - Designs by Inigo Jones, Percy Simpson and C. F. Bell, Introduction.

ladies floated in a great shell, like mother of pearle, rising with the motion of the waves, and six sea-monsters, varied in their shapes and dispositions, swam on either side carrying the twelve torch-bearers."[1] In this masque, Jones concentrated his scenery on a raised stage at the far end of the hall. Before his stage he hung a curtain which was painted to represent a woody landscape.[2]

In the masque, "The Hue and Cry after Cupid," he used the popular device of having a rock open at the sound of loud music, to disclose a splendid interior scene. In 1607, he staged "Twelfth Night." For this the stage was built with two levels, the upper being used for the acting, and the lower for the dancing. The scene was not changed, but he got variety by drawing back first one half the curtain exposing a scene, then drawing back the other and revealing a new one. He lowered trees in this masque, using an engine placed beneath the stage for the purpose. Suspended on wires were artificial bats and owls that moved continually. In other masques, he got variety by drawing back curtains at different times.[3]

For each masque, a specially designed proscenium was constructed, whose ornamentations dealt emblematically with the subject matter of the masque itself. The first arch, which in reality was only a partial arch, was used in the "Haddington Masque." The first complete arch

1 - Designs by Inigo Jones, Percy Simpson and C. F. Bell, Page 10.

2 - The Court Masque, Enid Welsford, Page 175.

3 - The Court Masque, Enid Welsford, Page 181.

appeared in 1611 in "Tethys Festival." "First on eyther side stood a great statue of twelve foot high, representing Neptune and Nereus. These sea-gods stood on pedestals and were all of gold. Behinde them were two pillasters, on which hung compartments with other deuises, and these bore up a rich Freeze, wherein were figures of tenne foote long, of flouds, and Nymphes, with a number of naked children, dallying with a draperies which they seemed to holde up, that the scene might be seene, and the ends thereof fell downe in foldes by the pillasters. In the midst was a compartment with this inscription, 'Tethyas Epinicia, Tethys feasts of triumph.' This was supported by two winged boyes, and all the work was done with that force and boldnesse on the gold and silver, as the figures seemed round and not painted."[1]

Curtains were used only at the beginning and the end of a masque, so all the scenery had to be changed before the audience. This change was usually made by machinery. In one method he used, he placed the scenery on perpendicular, revolving triangular forms which were turned by machinery placed under the stage. This method was soon abandoned, however, because of the lack of space, and also because it afforded only three changes of scene. In the Carolan masques, the "scenery was all arranged along the two sides of an equilateral triangle of which the base formed the proscenium opening and the apex, the vanishing point, placed in the center of the horizontal line. The wings along the side jutted out more and more in strict proportion as they receded.

1 - Designs by Inigo Jones, Percy Simpson and C. F. Bell, Page 8.

The farther back they went, the shorter they became. A sky-border was provided for each row of wings and as the wings grew shorter, the border became longer."[1]

Richly varied schemes of color and light played an important part in Jones's settings. He made much of the contrast of light and darkness. The scene in which the masque appeared was always a blaze of splendor, and it was usually preceded by something somber and subdued in tint. Jones had masses of light revolving. This was a device to distract the attention of the spectators from the points where the scenery was being shifted. It may have been that Jones used a screen or oiled paper to soften his light effects.[2]

The cost of presenting these masques ranged from 5,000 to 20,000 pounds. Although the public theatres of the day were interested in this method of presentation, the expense was so great that it was absolutely impossible for them to attempt it. The great resources of the Court stage are astonishing, but we find that they are, for the most part, imitations and actual borrowings from the French ballets and the Italian intermedii.[3] The masques had a direct influence on the initial scenic system of the Restoration theatre. The first set of scenery for it was designed by John Webb, a pupil of Jones, for Davenant's "Siege of Rhodes."[4]

1 - Elizabethan Playhouse, W. J. Lawrence, Page 107, Vol. 1.

2 - Designs by Inigo Jones, Percy Simpson and C. F. Bell, Pages 12-14.

3.- The Court Masque, Enid Welsford, Page 242.

4 - Designs by Inigo Jones, Percy Simpson and C. F. Bell, Page 7.

VII.

The Dramatic Interregnum

1642 - 1660

On September 2, 1642, the theatres were ordered closed and on October 22, 1646, a much stricter ordinance was passed providing that the actors in "Stage Plays, Interludes, and other common Plays be punished as Rogues, according to the Law." A year later, this was followed by a still more drastic order, one permitting the Lord Mayor and others to destroy galleries, seats, and boxes in the theatre, to flog the actors, and to fine the spectators for the benefit of the poor.[1] During the Civil War, most of the actors enlisted on the Royal side. After the war, they gathered together to revive their old trade. In 1648, Lowin Taylor, Pollard, Burt, and Hart played privately in the Cockpit. All went well for four days; then they were surprised by the soldiers. The actors were put into prison and all their costumes and valuables were plundered. From then on, they were careful to play only in gentlemen's houses where a purse was made up for them.[2]

The acting in the Commonwealth Period was of two types. Some actors performed secretly at the old theatres. Some others formed a group and acted drolls in theatres, inns, and halls, A droll was a short one act farce, usually taken from some well-known play. Another group formed a company and, under the leadership of George Jolly, set

1 - The English Drama of the Restoration and 18th Century, G. H. Nettleton, Page 14.

2 - Thomas Betterton, Robert Lowe, Chapter I.

off for Germany. Jolly later associated himself with William Beeston who was formerly master of the King's Company of Child Players at Salisbury Court. Beeston was a part of the acting link between the Elizabethan and Restoration Periods. He was the son of Christopher, who had known Shakespeare and Spenser. In 1660, he owned Salisbury Court and later he became associated with the theatres of Charles I's time through Davenant, a leader of a patent company in the Restoration era.[1]

1 - British Drama, Allardyce Nicoll, Pages 215-217.

VIII.

Davenant and the Siege of Rhodes

Sir William Davenant may be regarded as the outstanding link between the Elizabethan and the Restoration theatres. Because he had been so active with the Royalists, he was imprisoned and it was feared that he would be put to death. As soon as he was released, however, he started work on a method of presenting plays. He was more clever than most of the men of his day. Instead of defying the law and producing plays, he masked his intentions and got the law on his side. When he was seeking the support of the Lord Keeper, Sir Blustrade Whitelocke, he took great pains to call his work "our opera." The title page of the 1656 Quarto of the Siege of Rhodes betrays equal caution in describing the piece as "Made a Representation by the Art of Prospective in Scenes, and the Story sung in Recitative Musick." Although the Siege of Rhodes was given at a private house, admission was charged. It was a great success. This opera marks the reawakening of the interest in drama. The full title was, "The Siege of Rhodes, made a Representation by the Art of Prospective in Scenes; and the Story sung in Recitative Musick, at the back part of Rutland House, in the upper end of Aldersgate Street, London."[2] The scenes were crude but they were the most important set on the English stage because they were the first. They were designed by John Webb. Davenant says of them, "It has been often

1 - English Drama of the Restoration and 18th Century, G. H. Nettleton, Page 20.

2 - Famous Plays, J. Fitzgerald Malloy, Page 20.

wisht that our scenes (we having oblig'd ourselves to the variety of five changes according to the Ancient Dramatic distinction made for time) had not been confined to eleven foot in height, and about fifteen in depth, including the places of passage reserved for the Musick. There is so narrow an allowance for the fleet of Solyman the Magnificent, his army, the Island of Rhodes, and the Varieties attending the Siege of the City, that I fear you will think we invite you to such a contracted trifle as that of Caesar carved upon a nut."[1]

Taking his idea from the Court masques, Davenant put his scenes in a frame. The designs on the framework were symbolic of the whole performance. On the frieze in the center was the name, Rhodes. It was ornated with the arms of the various nations of Rhodes. The frieze was before the curtain that was raised to disclose the scenery intended for the action. The scenery was not the exact setting for the action, but rather an illustration of it. Davenant used the same scenery in several scenes although it was suitable for only one.[2]

The Siege of Rhodes was the first public dramatic performance in which an English woman appeared. She, Mrs. Coleman, did not say the words but chanted them. The first play in which a woman spoke the words was in Othello in 1660.[3]

So far as the records of the English stage show, the scenery for the Siege of Rhodes was the first used on that stage, but we know that

1 - Thomas Betterton, Robert Lowe, Page 6.

2 - Sir William D'Avenant, James W. Tupper, Introduction.

3 - Ibid.

scenery had been used before in different countries in the presentation of Miracle plays. We have already seen that very expensive scenery had been used for the masques at Court. For some time, England depended on foreign sources for architectural theories and skill. Foreign artists were brought to England, and English artists went to Italy to study, as we have seen in the case of Inigo Jones.[1]

With the production of the Siege of Rhodes, Davenant did three important things. He awakened a new interest in drama. He introduced scenery on the English stage. The first English woman to appear on the stage acted in his opera. In the next period in which he takes an active part, we will see the change, and the effect that these three things had on the English stage.

1 - Scenes and Machines on the English Stage, Lily B. Campbell, Page 81.

Part II.

Introduction

Charles the Second returned to the throne of England in 1660. This date also marks the opening of the Restoration period in the theatre, with the grant of two patents, one to Thomas Killigrew and the other to Sir William Davenant. These patents gave each man the right to erect a theatre and to manage a company of actors. Throughout the era, the playhouses were thrown optn to immorality, gaiety, and wit.

Charles II set the tone of the age. He was a man of ability and artistic taste, a lover of art, literature, and pleasure, and he manifested a keen interest in the theatre. He granted the two theatrical patents. Killigrew's company became known as The King's Servants, and a theatre was built for them in a riding yard in Drury Lane. Davenant's actors were called The Duke of York's Servants, and their theatre was erected near Lincoln's Inn Fields.

Although the patents were granted in 1660, the Theatre Royal, (Killigrew's), was not ready until April, 1663. In the meantime, however, the company acted in a tennis court fitted up as a theatre. It was in this makeshift theatre that the first English actress, Mrs. Anne Marshall, appeared in the character of Desdemona. When the Theatre Royal opened, some of Davenant's best actors, probably by royal command, left him to join Killigrew's company. Among these were Hart, grand-nephew of Shakespeare, Mohun, a great tragic actor, and Lacy, the King's

favorite. In his "Apology," Colbey Cibber says: "Ten of the King's Company were in the royal household establishment, having each ten yards of scarlet cloth with a proper quantity of lace allowed them for liveries and in their warrents from the Lord Chamberlain were styled as 'Gentlemen of the Great Chamber'." This statement gives us an idea of the social importance enjoyed by the actors.

The personnel of the theatrical audience was mainly of the Court and its followers who were the educated and the members of elegant society. The commercial class was slower to adopt the playgoing habit. The cheaper parts of the house were filled, for the most part, with lackeys in attendance on their masters and mistresses. They were admitted free to the upper gallery. Four fifths of the audience consisted of noblemen, fops, beaux, wits, and women of the Court who were as depraved and licentious as the men. They sat in the pit or in boxes. The footmen or the stray country cousins made up the other fifth.[1] The audience was not large. Women at first wore masks so that they could hide their identity, and thus keep a watchful eye on their husbands and other members of the audience no so nearly related to them, or so that they could hide the blush of shame on the cheek of modesty. The audience was equally as licentious as the entertainment and came but to see themselves and their manners reflected as in a looking-glass. Little of the play could be heard amidst the clamor of the spectators, the gallants combing their

1 - Restoration Drama, Allardyce Nicoll, Page

long periwigs and criticising the play aloud, or carrying on a flirtation with some female, or toying with the orange wenches who were usually very important factors in the playhouse.

The run of a play was restricted to a few successive performances only, and it was impossible for a playwright to make a fortune by a single production. His re-imbursement was limited to the proceeds of every third night.

Charles the Second was the first sovereign to attend a theatre with any degree of frequency.

II

Killigrew and the Theatre Royal

Charles II issued a warrant on July 9, 1660, giving Thomas Killigrew the right to erect a company of players, who were to be known as The King's Company, and to build a theatre. No other company of actors were to be allowed except this one and one other, granted to Sir William Davenant.[1] Killigrew opened his theatre on November eighth in Gibbon's Tennis Court, located in the narrow slums of Vere Street near Clare Market. Three years later, he and the principal actors obtained a forty-one year lease of some land in the parishes of St. Martin in the Fields and St. Paul's Convent Garden from the Earl of Bedford. This land was known as the riding yard. A new theatre was built, costing fifteen thousand pounds, besides the rent of fifty pounds for the ground. The theatre was 112 feet long, east and west, and 59 feet wide, north and south.[2] It was a combination of French and Elizabethan ideas. After 1620, playhouses in Paris had been installed in tennis courts. This new theatre was a long, narrow building similar to a tennis court. Instead of having the audience stand in the pit as was the custom in the French playhouses, the Elizabethan private theatre method of benches was used.

The Grand Entrance was in Little Russel Street. The stage was covered in by a tiled roof and it projected far into the pit in such a manner as to form lanes between it and the boxes on each side. The

1 - A New History of the English Stage, Percy Fitzgerald, Page 23.

2 - Some Account of the English Stage, John Genest, Page 141, Vol. 1.

boxes were also under cover, but the pit, at first, was open to the sky. Within five years this opening was covered with a glazed cupola. The stage was lighted with thick candles in brass cressets.[1]

An attempt was made to introduce an orchestra into the theatre, based on the Italian principle still in use, but it seems to have been a failure. Pepys went on the second day and recorded: "The musique being below, and most of it sounding under the very stage, there is no hearing of the basses at all, nor very well of the trebles, which sure must be mended." Soon afterwards the musicians were transferred to an elevated position.[2]

Downes called this theatre Drury Lane, but it is usually spoken of as The Theatre Royal.[3] The actors in this theatre, Burt, Lacy, Hart, Mohun, Shatterell, Clunn, Carlwright, and Winters made an agreement with Killigrew to take half the risks and profits. This placed Drury Lane on a businesslike and solid foundation.[4]

In January, 1671, The Theatre Royal burned and the King's Company moved to Lincoln's Inn Field which had been vacated two months before. While they were playing there, a new theatre was built according to plans drawn by Sir Christopher Wren. This new theatre was built on the site of the old one and it cost four thousand pounds.[5] In this building, there was no provision for an orchestra. A view of the stage is given

1 - A New History of the English Stage, Percy Fitzgerald, Page 88.

2 - The Elizabethan Playhouse, W. J. Lawrence, Page 162, Vol. 2.

3 - Some Account of the English Stage, John Genest, Page 141, Vol. 1.

4 - A New History of the English Stage, Percy Fitzgerald, Page 81.

5 - Famous Plays, J. Fitzgerald Molloy, Page 11.

on the frontispiece of the opera "Ariane, ou le Mariage de Bacchus," which was performed at the theatre in April 1674. It shows a projecting and semi-oval front, with ornamental base and no enclosure.[1] Here, in 1672 or 1673, women acted "Philaster" and "The Parson's Wedding" without the assistance of men. Mrs. Marshal, clad as a man, spoke the Prologue and Epilogue of both plays.[2]

Killigrew was a traditional figure of the Restoration, a wit, a roue, and a boon companion of the King. He was interested in the opera and music only because Davenant had made such a success of it. He employed a "hack writer" by the name of Duffet to parody the Shakespearean operas of Davenant.[3] These were called farcical pieces and are very similar to the burlesques of our modern stage. After Davenant introduced scenery, Killigrew wasted no time in using it. He, however, did not devote much energy to it. He installed the orchestra in its present position, before, below, and around the apron rather than at the side. To Killigrew goes the distinction of introducing the first actress to the stage, Mrs. Anne Marshal, who played the role of Desdemona in Othello. This distinction was only an accident of opportunity, however, because Davenant's theatre did not open until June, 1661.[4]

1 - The Elizabethan Playhouse, W. J. Lawrence, Page 162, Vol. 1.

2 - Some Account of the English Stage, John Genest, Vol. 1.

3 - A New History of the English Stage, Percy Fitzgerald, Page 83.

4 - The Playgoers Handbook, Malcolm Elwin, Pages 36-38.

III.

Davenant and the Duke's Theatre

Sir William Davenant may be regarded as the connecting link between the platform era of the Elizabethan period and the picture frame era. During the reign of Charles I, he had been granted a royal patent to erect a playhouse on Fleet Street, which was to be used not only for regular plays, but also for "musical entertainments" and scenic representations. Even at this time, Davenant was very much interested in the art of perspective and in the Italian opera. He was forced to give up this patent, however, because of the hostility of the other theatre managers.[1] Then, during the Commonwealth, Davenant attained the unattainable, and was given permission to produce an opera, and in this opera the first English set of scenery appeared. In 1660, with the return of Charles II to the throne and with the grant of two patents, one to Davenant and the other to Killigrew, the Restoration period was formally opened. These patents gave each man the right to erect a company of players and to build a theatre. The terms of Davenant's contract show the despotic control exercised: "I do authorize and appoint, in the playhouse or theatre commonly called the Cockpit in Drury Lane, William Davenant, gentleman, one of His Majesty's servants, for me and in my name, to take into his government and care for the said company of players, to govern, order, and dispose of them

1 - Shakespearean Playhouses, J. I. Adams, Page 424.

for acting, etc.; and I do hereby enjoin and command them to obey the said William Davenant, as they shall answer to the contrary."[1] Davenant's first thought after securing the patent was to get actors. He enlisted Betterton and all the other players at the Cockpit. He was first established at Salisbury Court, although at this time his company sometimes acted in the Cockpit.[2]

Davenant entered into a contract with his actors. He divided the shares in the theatre into fifteen parts. Two of these were to go toward house rent, building, scaffolding, and making frames for scenes. Davenant, the director, took seven on the following grounds: "To pay women who act, also for his trouble for erecting them all into a company, and his other expenses for many years." Another share was to be used to defray the expenses of props and costumes. The remaining five shares were divided among the actors. It is true that Davenant took the large part of the shares but he stood for all the expenses while what each actor received from his share was clear profit.

The picture frame era began with the opening of the new Duke's Theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields late in June, 1661, when the "Siege of Rhodes was revived." Before this time, neither scenery nor an opera had appeared on the Restoration stage.[4] Instead of the old

1 - A New History of the English Stage, Percy Fitzgerald, Page 12.

2 - A New History of the English Stage, Percy Fitzgerald, Page 23.

3 - A New History of the English Stage, Percy Fitzgerald, Page 84.

4 - The Elizabethan Playhouse, W. J. Lawrence, Page 138, Vol. 2.

Elizabethan platform which was surrounded by the audience, Davenant instituted the modern picture frame principle. This stage differed somewhat from the present-day stage, in the fact that in front, an oval apron projected, on which a greater part of the action took place, the back stage serving as a background.[1]

In 1662 Davenant and his company moved to a new theatre in Portugal Row, near Lincoln's Inn Fields.[2] While in that theatre, Davenant boarded his four leading actresses, who were Mrs. Davenport, Mrs. Saunderson, Mrs. Davies, and Mrs. Long. There was a clause in the patent stating: "When as the women's parts in plays have hitherto been acted by men in the habits of women, at which some have taken offence, we do permit and give leave for the time to come, that all women's parts be acted by women."[3] This theatre was closed in 1665 because of a plague, but it was reopened two years later.

The new Duke's Theatre at Dorset Gardens was completed in 1671. It was built by subscription at an unusual expense, and was very much larger than Lincoln's Inn Field.[4] For this theatre there is both written and pictorial evidence, but the two conflict. It is possible to explain these contradictions, however. Settle's tragedy, "The Empress," was acted in 1673. There are illustrations of the scenes given, and each shows an elaborate, but not complete, view of the

1 - The Playgoer's Handbook, M. Elwin, Page 37.

2 - Famous Plays, J. Fitzgerald Malloy, Page 8.

3 - Some Account of the English Stage, John Genest, Page 38, Vol. 1.

4 - Some Account of the English Stage, John Genest, Page 121, Vol. 1.

proscenium and its immediate surroundings. They show that the top of the proscenium arch projects over the apron by way of a soffit or sounding board. Above it is a large room with three curtained openings, one in front, and one on each side. It would have been absolutely impossible for any one to see the stage from this position; therefore it must have been just ornamental or merely a room occupied by the musicians during the time when their duties consisted only of playing preludes. The number of violins was increased from twelve to twenty-four on special operatic occasions. At such times the musicians usually sat at the front of the stage. This, perhaps, explains the contradiction presented by the instructions found in Shadwell's anonymously published opera, "The Tempest." "The front of the stage is opened and the Band of 24 Violins with Harpicals and Theorbos, which accompany the voices, are placed between the Pit and the Stage. While the Overture is playing the curtain rises and discovers a new Frontispiece joyn'd to the great Pylaster, on each side of the stage."[1] Mr. Lawrence feels that if this hadn't been a special arrangement, the description would have been superfluous.

It was not until the opening of this theatre that England could be said to possess a theatre in which the actors and machinists had enough room to operate with ease. In this second theatre, Davenant made amends for all the things that were lacking in the first. He didn't live to see this theatre completed though. He left his interest

1 - The Elizabethan Playhouse, W. J. Lawrence, Page 63, Vol. 1.

in the theatre to his widow and one of his sons, Dr. Charles Davenant. Killigrew's and Davenant's theatres united into one in 1682.

Davenant was a specialist in spectacular effects. He elaborated on thunder and lightning, storming of cities, gardens, woods, and the wilderness. He did everything possible to achieve a realistic reproduction. The King even lent state robes to assist in the accurate representation of a monarch. The expense of these experiments was great.[1]

1 - The Playgoer's Handbook, M. Elwin, Page 38.

IV.

Reconstruction and Comparison

With the exception of painted scenery and a front curtain, the Restoration stage is nothing more than a modified form of the Elizabethan outer and inner stage, the outer stage before the drop, and the inner stage behind it. Just as the arrangement of these parts is similar, so too are certain laws of staging.[1]

Three Important Parts

The three important parts of the Elizabethan stage were the outer stage which was a platform extending into the yard, the inner stage which was separated from the outer stage by a curtain, and the upper inner stage.[2] On the Restoration stage, we have a scenic opening which is about twenty-five feet square, backed by a curtain. Behind the curtain we find a stage of the same height and width as the opening and from fifteen to twenty-five feet deep. It is on this stage that all the props are placed. Before the curtain, we find the stage extending quite a distance toward the audience.[3] This outer stage, commonly called an apron, was born of the physical limitations of the Duke's Theatre. The house was long and narrow and many in the audience were far from the stage. Therefore it was necessary to bring the stage out as far as possible so that the players could be heard.[4] In 1699 Christopher Rich remodeled the theatre and cut four

1 - The Shakesperian Stage, Victor E. Albright, Page 60.

2 - Some Principles of Elizabethan Staging, G. F. Reynolds, Chapter 1.

3 - The Shakesperian Stage, Victor E. Albright, Page 48.

4 - The Elizabethan Playhouse, W. J. Lawrence, Page 3, Vol. 2.

feet from the outer stage. From then on, the inner stage gradually grew deep and the outer stage shallow until both the outer stage and the proscenium doors disappeared entirely.[1] Now to compare this with the platform stage! In both we find an inner and outer stage separated by a curtain. The difference is that the outer stage of the Restoration period is much smaller than the platform stage. Comparing the Messalina picture with a picture of the Duke's Theatre, the only visible difference lies in the gallery which, in the former, cuts the inner stage horizontally in two stories, each of which is about twelve feet high. There was no such division in the Duke's Theatre. The partition has been removed and it is all one story, about 25 feet in height.

Outer and Inner Stage Become One When the curtain was closed between the stages, the outer stage became one in itself; when it was drawn, it completely lost its identity and became one with the inner stage. In the platform stage, the curtain was a regular division between the stages, but the introduction of painted scenery, which was used in flats at the proscenium arch or a short distance back of it, became the dividing line between the two. When the flats were closed, the space before them became a distinct stage. Thus the size of the stage as a whole was subject to change at the placing or drawing of flats.[2]

Proscenium Doors On the Restoration stage, as on the Elizabethan, there were two permanent entering doors with balconies over each.

1 - The Shakesperian Stage, Victor E. Albright, Page 49.

2 - The Shakesperian Stage, Victor E. Albright, Page 84.

When scenery was introduced, the tiring rooms disappeared, so the doors and balconies were brought toward the front to be soon embedded in either side of the proscenium arch. These doors were still placed on the oblique as they were in the Elizabethan private theatres. They held that position almost to the present time.[1]

Entrances We have found that, in both the picture frame and platform stages, the main entrance was through the proscenium doors. It was not until much later that we find doors in the sets. We find that there is a parallelism in scenes in which eavesdroppers appear. They always came from the inner stage to peep through the curtain. For a long time dramatic technique was not altered by scenery. Often a character would disappear from sight by being closed in by flats. This was possible only when the action took place on the lower inner stage.[2]

Curtains Curtains played a much less important role on the picture stage. At the beginning of the play, the curtain was raised, and it did not fall until the end of the epilogue. The tableau ending was slow in coming into being. Just as in the Elizabethan theatres, the plays ended with a clear stage. Toward the close of the play, the characters went off the stage through the proscenium doors until no one was left, then the curtain fell. In Dryden's tragedy, "Tyrannic Love," acted at the Theatre Royal in 1669, there was an epilogue which was to be spoken by Mrs. Ellen and then she was to be carried off dead by the

1 - The Elizabethan Playhouse, W. J. Lawrence, Page 19, Vol. 1.

2 - The Elizabethan Playhouse, W. J. Lawrence, Page 175, Vol. 2.

Bearers. Nell Gwynn played the part of Mrs. Ellen and when the Bearers started to carry her off too soon, she jumped up suddenly and boxed their ears, saying: "Hold! Are you mad? You damned confounded dogs! I am to rise and speak the epilogue."[1] It seems that the curtains on this stage were rarely used to any material advantage. They opened at the beginning and closed at the end,--that was all.

Location of Regular Settings

In the platform stage, we found that most of the props were placed on the inner stage. The same thing was true on the Restoration stage. The props were located on the inner stage and were changed during an act division or during the enactment of a scene on the outer stage. For example: "The Rehearsal" Act V, scene 1. "Bayes and the two Gentlemen" (outer stage). "The location of the scene is not marked, and it is plainly on the outer stage. After a pompous speech by Bayes to the other gentlemen on the great scene that he is going to present 'The curtain is drawn up and two usurping Kings appear in state, with four Cardinals,' etc. There is no denying that this was on the inner stage. Undoubtedly the main settings were on the inner stage in both periods. The directions are too explicit to doubt this."[2]

Method of Production

Many of the plays of this period had from ten to twenty scenes. Needless to say, to stop and change scenery between the scenes would kill the play. To avoid an interval between scenes, the Elizabethan principle of alternation was employed and the

1 - The Elizabethan Playhouse, W. J. Lawrence, Page 177, Vol. 2.

2 - The Shakespearian Stage, Victor E. Albright, Page 91.

continuous act was introduced. In this continuous act, a change of scenes was marked by a change of flats at the proscenium arch. A change of scene on the inner stage was often made by merely changing the back flats. The outstanding way of avoiding long waits was to use varying portions of the inner stage with the outer by just opening and closing flats at different distances from the arch. Any number of combinations could be used. Scenery was usually being placed behind the flats while the action was going on before them. This method could only be used though when the sets were all of the same type. The scenes during this period usually fell into two classes, the scenes with props, and the scenes without props, and they often occurred in alternating scenes. When this condition existed, the alternation principle of the Elizabethan stage was used. While one scene was being set on the inner stage, another scene was being played before the curtain.[1]

Auditorium The auditorium was based on the principle used in the Elizabethan private theatres. The benches were placed in the pit in gradually ascending tiers until they were checked by the front partition of the boxes.[2] The floor of the house was entirely devoted to the pit. The first gallery was divided into boxes and so was a portion of the second or middle gallery. The upper gallery was left open and was used by the footmen of the quality in the boxes or pit.[3]

1 - The Shakesperian Stage, Victor E. Albright, Page 95.

2 - The Elizabethan Theatre, W. J. Lawrence, Page 160, Vol. 1.

3 - Thomas Betterton, Robert Lowe, Page 18.

Finances As has been said before, both Davenant and Killigrew made agreements with their actors in regard to the finances. In the Theatre Royal, half of the expense and half of the profits were taken over by the actors. The other half was taken over by Killigrew. In the Duke's Theatre, Davenant held the majority of the shares, but he met all the expenses of the theatre. He appointed three people to sell tickets in an adjoining room in the theatre; the actors, in turn, appointed a person to survey the money received. Davenant also appointed half the doorkeepers, the wardrobe keeper, and the barber. He furnished dresses but not hats, feathers, gloves, stockings, or shoes, unless they were to belong to the house wardrobe. Mr. Killigrew was to have a private box in the Duke's Theatre large enough to hold six persons.[1]

From the second epilogue of Dryden and Lee's "Duke of Guise," we learn that the price of boxes was four shillings; of the pit, half a crown; of the middle gallery, eighteen pence; and of the upper gallery, a shilling. When there was a new play the price of admission was almost doubled. There was an extra charge for admission back stage. All authors and poets had a claim for free admission.[2]

Advertisement Advertising in this era was very similar to that of the Elizabethan times. At the close of each performance, the next day's play was announced. Bills were also posted in the streets. The most valuable authority we have on this subject is Samuel Pepys. On September 15, 1668, he repeats that he saw "The Ladies a la Mode" at

1 - A New History of the English Stage, Percy Fitzgerald, Page 85.

2 - Thomas Betterton, Robert Lowe, Pages 18-21.

the King's playhouse and that an actor came out and announced the play for the next day. On March 24, 1662, Pepys reports that he went to see what play was to be acted, but he found no bill on the post because it was Passion Week.[1]

Time of Presentation Soon after the beginning of the Restoration era, the plays began at three o'clock in the afternoon. We learn this from the prologue of Dryden's "Wild Gallant," which was produced in February, 1663. By the end of that century, however, the plays were beginning at five o'clock. The theatres were opened at noon and anyone who wanted a good seat came early because there was no system of reserving seats. On May 18, 1668, Pepys went to the King's theatre at twelve o'clock to get a seat for Charles Sedley's comedy, "The Mulberry Garden." Some time later in the century, servants were sent to sit in the seats until just before the performance was to begin.[2]

Musicians Since people had to go to the theatre so early to get seats, music was furnished to keep them from getting tired. There are facts that point to the possibility of the custom being an inheritance from the platform era. In the Elizabethan playhouse, the musicians usually occupied an elevated position at the back and we have reasons to believe that they were in the same place in the Restoration age.

Scenes in some of the plays called for music. When this occurred, the musicians played on the stage and became a part of the scene.

1 - Thomas Betterton, Robert Lowe, Page 13.

2 - Thomas Betterton, Robert Lowe, Page 16.

This happened in Dryden's "An Evening's Love," Act II, scene 1. The musicians accompanying, the rival lovers engage in the quarrel of their employer and fall into fisticuffs.[1]

Play Bills There are four play bills that survive this age. The hour of the performance was never specified on a play bill. On each one of them is the sentence: "No money returned after the curtain is drawn." Each one ends: "Vivant Rex et Regina."

Play Bills[2]

I. Henry the Second, King of England at the Drury Lane on Wednesday, 9 November (1692). "Never acted but once."

The size of the bill was $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches by $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches. The size of the printed surface $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches by $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches. It is the oldest extant English play bill and the third oldest known bill in Europe.

II. The Indian Emperor: or the Conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards.

This was played at the Drury Lane, 30 November (1692).

The size of the bill was $7\frac{1}{4}$ inches by $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches and the size of the printed surface $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches by $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches. The original bill misspells Wensday and Emperour.

III. All for Love: or The World Well Lost.

This was performed at the Queen's Theatre, Dorset Gardens, Wednesday, 9 May (1694).

The size of the bill was 6 inches by $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches and the size of the printed surface was $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches by $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Dorset Garden ceased to be the Duke's and became the Queen's at the accession of James II to

1 - The Elizabethan Playhouse, W. J. Lawrence, Page 158, Vol. 2.

2 - The Elizabethan Playhouse, W. J. Lawrence, Vol. 2.

the throne in 1685.

IV. Theodosius: or the Force of Love.

This play was acted at the Queen's Theatre in Dorset Gardens on Tuesday, 12 June (1694).

The size of the bill was 6 inches by $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The printed surface covered a space $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches by $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

V.

Summary

As we have seen, there were two types of Elizabethan theatre, the public theatre, and the private theatre. We have found that the public theatre buildings ranged in shape from squares to octagons, while the private theatres were usually housed in rectangular buildings. The Restoration theatres used the French tennis court as a model, rather than either type of Elizabethan theatre. They were long, narrow, oblong structures. In the Elizabethan period, the public theatres were opened to the sky; consequently no artificial lighting was needed. The private theatres, however, were roofed over, so the stage had to be lighted by wax candles. All but one of the Restoration theatres were roofed over and lighted artificially.[1]

After 1660, the outer stage was cut down gradually from the huge platform of Shakespeare's day to a much smaller projection known as an apron. Early in the seventeenth century, the proscenium arch was absolutely unknown, but at the close of the same century, not a theatre was without one.

The first fatal blow to the old system of staging came with the introduction of scenery. From then on, more elaborate staging was necessary and that tended to increase the size of the inner stage. The platform stage was quite bare, but the picture stage was fairly realistic in its representation of life.

1 - British Drama, Allardyce Nicoll, Page 220.

Last but not least, women were allowed to act in the Restoration days, while, in Shakespeare's day, boys played the women's roles.

We have seen how the stages of these two eras differed. Now let us see in what ways they are similar. They both had an inner and an outer stage separated by a curtain. Both had the proscenium doors as main entering doors. The auditorium in the private theatres and in the Restoration theatres were similar, for both had benches in the pit arranged in gradually ascending rows. The advertising of both periods was quite similar. Bills were posted, and at the end of a play, the title of the next play was announced. Alternation of staging played a very important part in the production of dramas in both ages.

In concluding, we find the chief difference between the Elizabethan stage and the Restoration stage lies in the introduction of the picture frame stage, whose prime characteristics are the proscenium arch, the front curtain, and movable scenery.

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